

SECRETARY of STATE

Sam Reed



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April 9, 2007

The Honorable Dave Reichert
United States House of Representatives
1223 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Reichert,

My strong reservations regarding HR 811 were expressed to you in a recent communication. However, it is my understanding that the bill is currently moving in Congress, and I feel compelled to write you again to reinforce its damaging effects.

As Washington's Secretary of State, I am committed to supporting legislation that improves the accuracy and integrity of elections. Implementation of HR 811 would be detrimental to both. For the sake of protecting elections in Washington State and across the nation, it is imperative that you **VOTE NO on HR 811**.

A few states, such as Florida and Ohio, had difficulty implementing the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2006, and a few other states, such as California and New York, have yet to comply with HAVA. But Washington and the vast majority of states successfully implemented HAVA without incident. Additional federal mandates will not aid the states that perennially stumble and will only punish the states that comply. Several components of this bill are certain to thwart the progress that has occurred since the last federal elections legislation and will have an ominous impact on Washington State.

The legislation does not just require voter verified paper audit trails for electronic voting devices, which Washington and many other states already mandate. It also requires states to implement technology by next year that does not even exist. State and federal laws require voting equipment to be tested and certified at the state and federal levels before it can be deployed in an election. The normal timeframe for voting equipment to be developed, tested at the federal level, certified at the federal level, tested at the state level, certified at the state level, eligible for purchase by a jurisdiction, integrated into the jurisdiction's existing system, and tested again prior to use in an election is four years. This legislation omits those safeguards. Equipment rushed to market with no standards or testing will fail.

The requirements pertaining to audits in HR 811 are inappropriate. The legislation mandates that audits be performed in each county by persons with no professional experience and not under the control of the Chief Election Officer. The audits must occur prior to certification of each election, which will compromise the security of the ballots and the integrity of the election. We cannot estimate the costs.

Election administrators across the nation share the goal of conducting fair, accessible, and accurate elections. HR 811 does not accomplish that goal. I urge you to vote No on HR 811.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Reed', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

SAM REED
Secretary of State